

Last time they met, she kept
spitting on the cement outside
the bistro like a sailor. A unique
composite, I thought as I heard
this, of two temperaments that
just can't bite on earth. She keeps
(he said) her panties on in bed.
What did I tell him? I didn't. I
spit on the cement outside the
ship we happened to be sailing on.
To spit: an abstract gesture, of
the kind popular in the arts sixty
years ago; it counts as "action" now.

I'm not blind or slimy, she told
him, you're just an asshole with
unrealistic expectations. Summer
outside: black and white buildings,
covered in sweat. The picture evens
out (roughly) to brown. She swoons
at the idea of touching. I'm done
with her, he tells himself, strained
to keep his hands off: prime real
estate. But the parents-built picket
fence is stuck up his ass. Someday
he'll jounce it out, impale her on it—
right through the heart. I wonder,
she chimes blithely, if you can define slime?

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Each thinks the other a lonesome reprobate.
That's what I guess when I see the picture.
It's Elkins Park Square on a cold spring night;
they're almost sitting on their hands. One
went up, as they say, one went down, but
you'll never hear a word of this is Cheltenham.
They can't gloat anymore, so they make an
art of obfuscation. That's why I seldom go
back. Elkins Park Square is scary at night.
There are ghosts by the ice skating rink.

Never one to cut corners about cutting corners, you spun the Subaru into a rough U-turn right in the middle of Old York Road at midnight, scaring the shit out of this self-declared “artist.” The issue, as ever, was nothing particular to celebrate. We could only connect nothing with nothing in our private suburban waste land. Here’s where the fun starts— I got out, motherfucker. I made it. I say “I,” and it works. But Old York Road at midnight is still what it is. I still have to live there the same way you do.

Torque: you can start a mile past
personal emotions, but you must
jog back and touch emotion's very
green blarney stone every few lines
to fulfill responsibilities no one else
wants to engage. Slats of blinds get
shut to keep sun out of your eyes,
even as the torque expresses both
elisions, ellipses, eerie as they form
a blockade of angles to knock you
down. It's the warp of centuries: "I"
set loose to torque combinations of
data in every way creepy to desires
for raw earth permanence, mountainous
forms. They attract mist, kisses, and the
accursed share of angst that dawdles in
flesh like a child with a blanket.